DEFINITION OF "GANG"

As noted previously, the proposed Senate bill's definition of gang is similar to the definition in anti-gang legislation of most other states.

Frederic Thrasher, 1927
Beth Bjerregaard, The Constitutionality of Anti-Gang Legislation, 21 Campbell L Rev 31, 44 n 74 (1998).

- One of the earliest definitions of a gang was developed by Frederick Thrasher, an author and sociologist at the University of Chicago. He defined a gang as an "interstitial group, originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behaviors: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory."

Black's Law Dictionary (8th ed. 2004)

- A group of persons who go about together or act in concert, esp. for antisocial or criminal purposes. • Many gangs (esp. those made up of adolescents) have common identifying signs and symbols, such as hand signals and distinctive colors.

National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations, 2005 Gang Threat Assessment
< http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/what/2005_threat_assesment.pdf>

- A group or association of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Criminal activity includes juvenile acts that if committed by an adult would be a crime.

Federal Sentencing Enhancement Statute: 18 U.S.C. § 521(a)

- "Criminal street gang" means an ongoing group, club, organization, or association of 5 or more persons-- (A) that has as 1 of its primary purposes the commission of 1 or more of the criminal offenses described in subsection (c) (particular narcotic and violence-related crimes); (B) the members of which engage, or have engaged within the past 5 years, in a continuing series of offenses described in subsection (c); and (C) the activities of which affect interstate or foreign commerce.

HISTORY

Understanding And Responding to Gangs in an Emerging Gang Problem Context
G. David Curry and Scott H. Decker, 31 Val. U. L. Rev. 523 (1996-7)

- (See Attachment A)

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Youth Gangs: An Overview (1998)
<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/167249.pdf>

- Gangs appear to have spread in New England in the early 1800's as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum in the first large cities in the United States: New York,

Boston, and Philadelphia. Gangs began to flourish in Chicago and other large cities during the industrial era, when immigration and population shifts reached peak level. Early in American history, gangs seem to have been most visible and most violent during periods of rapid population shifts . . . characterized by an ebb and flow pattern.

The United States has seen four distinct periods of gang growth and peak activity: the late 1800's, the 1920's, the 1960's, and the 1990's. In the 1970's and 1980's, because of increased mobility and access to more lethal weapons, many gangs became more dangerous. Gang fights previously involving fists or brass knuckles increasingly involved guns. The growing availability of automobiles, coupled with the use of more lethal weapons, fueled the growth of drive-by shootings, a tactic that previously took the form of on foot hit-and-run forays.

Gangs of the 1980's and 1990's seem to have both more younger and more older members than before, more members with prison records or ties to prison inmates, and more weapons of greater lethality. They are less concerned with territorial affiliations, use alcohol and drugs more extensively, and are more involved in drug trafficking. Some youth gangs appear to have been transformed into entrepreneurial organizations by the crack cocaine epidemic that began in the mid-1980's. Some youth groups, many of which are not considered bona fide gangs, are not seriously involved in illegal activities and provide mainly social opportunities for their membership. Some gangs seldom use drugs and alcohol, and some have close community ties.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN GANGS

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Characteristics of Modern Youth Gangs
<http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjbul2001_12_1/characteristics.html>

- (See Attachment B)

Modern-Day Youth Gangs
<http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjbul2002_06_1/contents.html>

- (See Attachment C)

Understanding Gangs & Gang Mentality
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/eousa/foia_reading_room/usab5403.pdf>

- (See Attachment D)

MIDWEST TRENDS

National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations
2005 National Gang Threat Assessment
< http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/what/2005_threat_assesment.pdf>

- Gang activity around schools and college campuses has increased.
- Gangs are concealing their affiliations and colors to hide from law enforcement.
- Gangs are substantially involved in both the wholesale and street-level distribution in this region.
- Gangs are increasingly cooperating with each other to facilitate crime and drug trafficking.
- Gang and drug activity in Indian Country has increased.

- Indian Country is being affected by the high level of drug trafficking. Hispanic street gangs are reportedly using Native Americans to transport narcotics onto reservations.

NUMBERS

Federal Bureau of Investigation
<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/ngic/violent_gangs.htm>

- About 30,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs with approximately 800,000 members operate in the U.S. today. Many are sophisticated and well organized; all use violence to control neighborhoods and boost their illegal money-making activities, which include drug trafficking, robbery, theft, fraud, extortion, prostitution rings, and gun trafficking.

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
National Youth Gang Survey Trends From 1996 to 2000
<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/fs200203.pdf>

- A total of 284 cities with both a population of more than 25,000 and persistent gang activity reported gang homicide statistics for 1999 and 2000. Ninety-one percent of cities with a population of more than 250,000 reported at least one gang-related homicide from 1999 to 2000, as did 64% of cities with a population between 100,000 and 250,000, 55% of cities with a population between 50,000 and 100,000, and 32% of cities with a population between 25,000 and 50,000.
- In 1996, 50% of gang members were juveniles (i.e., younger than 18) and 50% were adults (i.e., 18 and older). In 1999, these numbers were 37% and 63%, respectively.
- In 1999, respondents reported that 47% of gang members were Hispanic, 31% African American, 13% white, 7% Asian, and 2% "other."

Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting Program
Crime in the United States, 2003
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_03/pdf/03sec5.pdf>

- In 1999, there were 580 incidents of juvenile gang killings compared to the 819 in 2003.

Attachment A

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO GANGS IN AN EMERGING GANG PROBLEM CONTEXT

G. DAVID CURRY, PH.D.*
& SCOTT H. DECKER, PH.D.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The gang crime problem has re-emerged over the last decade in St. Louis. The current state of gangs in the city is characteristic of national trends in the proliferation of youth gangs and provides a localized context for understanding and responding to what has become a national-level problem. Our emphasis is on the role of research in both assessing the nature of gang problems and in developing a systematic community-based response to such problems. The gang problem in St. Louis shares features both unique to the St. Louis community context and characteristic of gang problems in other urban settings. Our task is facilitated by St. Louis having been selected as one of a limited number of sites where a research-based demonstration program is being implemented by a local community with support and direction from federal agencies. This Article tells the story of how research has played a role in planning the St. Louis response and will continue to play a role in the evaluation and refinement of the response process. We begin with a review of what is known about the St. Louis gang problem.

II. THE ST. LOUIS GANG PROBLEM

A. The History of Gangs in St. Louis

Urban gangs of European immigrant youths were described at the turn of the century by Riis[1] and Asbury[2] in New York City and by Thrasher[3] in Chicago. These gangs were believed to have emerged as a result of the disruption of population movement associated with rapid industrialization. Rivalries were often enduring and inter-gang violence was common. Decker and Van Winkle note that Thrasher, in his account of Chicago gangs, refers to

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* Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri-St. Louis.
** Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

1. JACOB A. RIIS, THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR (1892).
2. HERBERT ASBURY, THE GANGS OF NEW YORK: AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE UNDERWORLD (1928).
3. FREDERIC M. THRASHER, THE GANG (1927).

St. Louis gangs.[4] An even earlier reference to gang activity in St. Louis was made in a journalistic account of warring "tribes" and "clans" of German and Irish youths in the area just north of downtown St. Louis.[5] The prohibition era increased adult involvement in gangs that had earlier predominantly involved youths and led to greater group organization (including ties to corrupt political officials) and violent conflicts associated with the trade in illegal alcohol. Lower levels of violence characterized the emergence of the first African American gangs in post-World-War-II St. Louis.[6] The African American gangs followed the patterns common to their European American predecessors. The gangs emerged in the areas just north of downtown and favored the colors blue and red as badges of affiliation. A historical irony is that contemporary African American gangs struggle for some of the same turfs and "claim" the same colors of red and blue as did immigrant gangs earlier in the century.

B. The National Pattern in the 1980s and the Re-Emergence of St. Louis Gangs

There was a period in the late 1970s and early 1980s that researchers spoke of the "end of the youth gang." In a study of twelve major U.S. cities, Walter Miller found that six of the cities reported youth gang problems.[7] St. Louis was one of the cities that Miller identified as not having a gang crime problem. By 1988 national-level concern with youth gangs began to increase. From a national survey conducted in that year, Spergel and Curry reported that seventy-four of ninety-eight (75.5%) jurisdictions screened reported the presence of a gang-related crime problem.[8] Gang problem cities were classified into two categories: "chronic" gang problem cities where the current gang problem was dated as emerging prior to 1980, and "emerging" gang problem cities where the current gang problem was reported to have emerged after 1980.[9] In chronic gang problem cities, gangs were generally more organized—often spanning more than one generation. In emerging gang problem cities, gangs were generally less organized and perceived to be engaged in less serious levels of crime. In this survey, St. Louis was identified as an emerging gang problem city.[10] For

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4. SCOTT H. DECKER & BARRIK VAN WINKLE, LIFE IN THE GANG: FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND VIOLENCE 36 (1996).

5. J.A. DACAS & J.W. BUELL, A TOUR OF ST. LOUIS OR THE INSIDE LIFE OF A GREAT CITY (1878).

6. DECKER & VAN WINKLE, *supra* note 4, at 37.

7. WALTER B. MILLER, U. S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, VIOLENCE BY YOUTH GANGS AND YOUTH GROUPS AS A CRIME PROBLEM IN MAJOR AMERICAN CITIES 7-14 (1975).

8. Irving A. Spergel & G. David Curry, *The National Youth Gang Survey: A Research and Development Process*, *in* THE GANG INTERVENTION HANDBOOK 359, 362 (Arnold P. Goldstein & C. Ronald Huff eds., 1993).

9. *Id.*

10. *Id.* at 360.

thirty-five jurisdictions in this study, 1439 gangs and 120,636 gang members were tabulated.[11] No gangs or gang members from St. Louis were included in these tabulations.[12] St. Louis was categorized as a city with a gang crime problem but "no organized response" to the problem and no official estimates of the problem's magnitude.[13]

In the year 1991, St. Louis made its first statistical contribution on gang crime problems to a Justice Department survey. Archive data showed St. Louis as reporting thirty-three gangs and eight gang homicides.[14] For 1993 and 1994, the University of Missouri-St. Louis Violence Project tabulated thirty-three and fifty-four gang-related homicides for St. Louis, or respectively, 13.7% and 25.5% of all homicides.[15] The 1994 proportion is comparable to the Chicago statistic of 26.2%.[16] The disproportionate cost of the gang crime problem for St. Louis' African American community is reflected in the over-representation of blacks among the victims of gang-related homicides. In 1993, all but one of the victims (97.0%) were African Americans.[17] In 1994, fifty-two of the fifty-four victims (96.3%) were African Americans.[18]

C. The Young Men and Women Behind the Statistics

A three-year field study sought to extend understanding of the gang problem through seeking out the opinions and perspectives of active gang members and their families.[19] The findings of this study concurred with the suggestions of senior gang researcher Malcolm Klein that the proliferation of gang problems in the U.S. over the last decade had been related to major economic changes and to the diffusion of cultural artifacts associated with gang conflict.[20] St. Louis is a city that had been dramatically altered by de-industrialization and the associated transformation of the national economy. Its loss of almost two-thirds of its population over a period of three decades constituted a phenomenal loss

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11. Irving Spergel et al., Survey of Youth Gang Problems and Programs in 45 Cities and 6 Sites 36 (May, 1990) (unpublished manuscript, on file with the *Valparaiso University Law Review*).

12. Spergel & Curry, *supra* note 8, at 361.

13. *Id.* at 362.

14. G. DAVID CURRY ET AL., U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, ESTIMATING THE NATIONAL SCOPE OF GANG CRIME FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA (1996).

15. Computed by authors for *Valparaiso University Law Review* Conference on Teenage Violence & Drug Use from electronic database of St. Louis Homicide Project, University of Missouri-St. Louis component of the National Consortium of Violence Research (Nov. 15, 1996).

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*

18. *Id.*

19. DECKER & VAN WINKLE, *supra* note 4, at 38-39.

20. MALCOLM W. KLEIN, THE AMERICAN STREET GANG: ITS NATURE, PREVALENCE, AND CONTROL (1995).

Attachment B

Characteristics of Modern Youth Gangs

- Location
- Member Diversity
- Organization
- Onset of Local Gang Problems
- Gang Stereotypes
- Gang Migration

Location

Once a problem primarily in large cities, youth gangs are now present in suburbs, small towns, and rural areas (Miller, W.B., 2001). In 1999, law enforcement agencies reported active youth gangs in 100 percent of the Nation's largest cities (those with populations of 250,000 or more), 47 percent of suburban counties, 27 percent of small cities (those with populations below 25,000), and 18 percent of rural counties (Egley, 2000; Howell, Moore, and Egley, forthcoming). The average year of gang problem onset was 1989 for large cities, 1990 for suburban counties, 1992 for small cities, and 1993 for rural counties (National Youth Gang Center, 1999). The localities reporting later onset of gang problems are most likely to be in rural counties, small cities, and suburban counties with populations of less than 50,000 (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, forthcoming).

Gangs are also becoming commonplace in institutions, including schools, that had been considered safe havens. For many students, school has become a gathering place for gangs. More than one-third (37 percent) of a nationally representative sample of students reported gang presence in their schools in 1995, a 100-percent increase over 1989 (Howell and Lynch, 2000). Gang presence is being reported even in the military (Hasenauer, 1996).

Member Diversity

Although many gangs continue to be based on race or ethnicity, gangs are increasingly diverse in racial/ethnic composition. Law enforcement agencies responding to the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey estimated that more than one-third (36 percent) of youth gangs had a significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups (National Youth Gang Center, 2000). Small cities had the largest proportion of gangs with mixed race/ethnicity. The Midwest had a larger proportion of mixed gangs than any other region.

Recent student surveys and field studies of local gangs also report significant gender mixtures (Esbensen, Deschenes, and Winfree, 1999; Fleisher, 1998; Miller, J.A., 2001). For example, 92 percent of gang youth in one student survey (Esbensen, Deschenes, and Winfree, 1999:42) said both boys and girls belonged to their gang.

Gangs in suburban areas, small towns, and rural areas show more membership diversity than gangs in large cities. Gangs in these areas have more racially/ethnically mixed membership (National Youth Gang Center, 2000:22–23) and include more females, Caucasians, and younger members than gangs in larger cities (Curry, 2000; Howell, Egley, and Gleason, forthcoming).

Organization

Although a fixed definition has not been established, youth gangs are often presumed to be highly organized groups that engage in some level of criminal activity. Several studies challenge the notion that youth gangs are highly organized. Decker and colleagues (1998) compared the two most highly organized gangs (as reported by police) in Chicago, IL, and San Diego, CA. They found that the Chicago gangs were far more organized than the San Diego gangs but levels of organization were not necessarily linked to increased involvement in crime (Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, 1998:408). Their observation that the San Diego gangs were disorganized mirrors Sanders' (1994) findings. Other studies have questioned the extent of youth gang organization in emerging gang cities such as Denver, CO (Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher, 1993); Cleveland and Columbus, OH (Huff, 1996, 1998); Kansas City, MO (Fleisher, 1998); Milwaukee, WI (Hagedorn, 1988); Pittsburgh, PA (Klein, 1995); San Francisco, CA (Waldorf, 1993); Seattle, WA (Fleisher, 1995); and St. Louis, MO (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Decker and Curry, 2000).

Modern youth gangs are generally less territory based than gangs of the past (Klein, 1995; Miller, 1992; National Youth Gang Center, 2000). In the older gang cities and the Southwest, gangs traditionally were tied strongly to their neighborhoods or barrios. The Mexican-American "turf gang" pattern, transmitted across generations and ethnicities, has given way to autonomous gangs as the predominant pattern (Klein, 1995:102). These autonomous gangs consist of single, named groups occupying smaller territories and may be based in a neighborhood, a public housing project, or another community location (such as a schoolyard or shopping mall).

Some gang research in the 1960s suggested that youngsters were pressured to join gangs by peers who used strong-arm tactics (Yablonsky, 1967). Community (adult) representatives view peer pressure to join gangs as irresistible (Decker and Kempf-Leonard, 1991). However, it is not as difficult for adolescents to resist gang pressures as is commonly believed. In most instances, adolescents can refuse to join gangs without reprisal (Decker and Kempf-Leonard, 1991; Fleisher, 1995; Huff, 1998; Maxson, Whitlock, and Klein, 1998).

Perpetuating the myth of lifetime membership helps sustain a gang, because the group's viability depends on the ability of active members to maintain the perception that leaving the gang is nearly impossible (Decker and Lauritsen, 1996:114). The reality is that members (especially marginal members) typically can leave a gang without serious consequences (Decker and Lauritsen, 1996; Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Fleisher, 1995). In fact, most adolescents do not remain in gangs for long periods of time—particularly in areas with emerging gang problems. Studies in three cities that developed gang problems fairly recently—Denver, CO; Rochester, NY; and Seattle, WA—show that from 54 to 69 percent of adolescents who joined gangs in the three cities stayed in them for 1 year or less and 9 to 21 percent belonged for 3 years or more (Thornberry, 1998).

Practitioner's View: The Challenges of Hybrid Gangs

Law enforcement officers from communities unaffected by gangs until the 1980s or early 1990s often find themselves scrambling to obtain training relevant to hybrid gangs. When gang-related training first became widely available in the early 1990s, it often emphasized historical information, such as the formation of the Los Angeles Crips and Bloods in the late 1960s or the legacy of Chicago-based gangs (the Black Gangster Disciples, Latin Kings, and Vice Lords). As law enforcement officers learned about the origins of these influential gangs, they sometimes attempted to apply this outdated information in their efforts to deal with hybrid gangs in their jurisdictions. The assumption that new gangs share the characteristics of older gangs can impede law enforcement's attempts to identify and effectively counter local street gangs, and actions based on this assumption often elicit inappropriate responses from the community as a whole. Citizens may react negatively to law enforcement efforts when they sense that gang suppression actions are geared to a more serious gang problem than local gangs appear to present.

Because of uncertainty in reporting on problem groups such as "cliques," "crews," "posses," and other nontraditional collectives that may be hybrid gangs, some police department staff spend an inordinate amount of time trying to precisely categorize local groups according to definitions of traditional gangs. When training law enforcement groups on investigative issues surrounding drug trafficking or street gangs, instructors must resist the tendency to connect gangs in different cities just because the gangs share a common name. If the groups engage in ongoing criminal activity and alarm community members, law enforcement officers should focus on the criminal activity, regardless of the ideological beliefs or identifiers (i.e., name, symbols, and group colors) of the suspects. This practical approach would circumvent the frustration that results from trying to pigeonhole hybrid gangs into narrow categories and would avoid giving undue attention to gangs that want to be recognized as nationwide crime syndicates.

Onset of Local Gang Problems

It appears that the emergence of gangs in new localities[2] in the 10-year period 1986–96 has contributed to the growth of hybrid gangs. For example, the use of names and symbols of traditional gangs may provide a sense of "legitimacy" to new groups, but the context of the new localities may produce adaptations that lead to divergence from the traditional patterns. Data from the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey show that nearly 9 in 10 (87 percent) of the localities reporting gang problems said that onset occurred during the 1986–96 period (National Youth Gang Center, 1999). An analysis of National Youth Gang Center (NYGC) survey data on early onset (before 1990) versus late onset (during the 1990s) localities (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, forthcoming) found that gangs in the newer gang-problem localities were distinctly different in their demographic characteristics from traditional gangs in jurisdictions where gang problems began much earlier. Gangs in late-onset localities had younger members, slightly more females, more Caucasians, and more of a racial/ethnic mixture. Caucasians were the predominant racial/ethnic group in the latest onset (1995–96) localities. Gangs in localities where gang problems began in the 1990s also tended to have a much larger proportion of middle-class teens.

Gang members in late-onset localities also were far less likely to be involved in violent crimes (homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, and use of firearms) and property crimes than gang members in early-onset localities. For example, about 8 in 10 gang members in localities with the earliest onset of gang problems (before 1986) were said to use firearms in assault crimes "often" or "sometimes," compared with fewer than 3 in 10 gang members in localities with the latest onset (1995–96).

A comparison of drug trafficking patterns in areas with early and late onset of gang problems found that both gang member involvement in drug sales and gang control of drug distribution were much less likely to be significant problems in jurisdictions where gang problems emerged in the past decade (Howell and Gleason, 1999). In the newer gang problem localities, gang control of drug distribution was less likely to be extensive than was gang member involvement in drug sales.

Gang member involvement in drug sales was less extensive in the oldest gang jurisdictions (onset of gang problems before 1980) than in jurisdictions where onset occurred between 1981 and 1990 (Howell and Gleason, 1999). Gang member involvement in drug sales was most extensive in jurisdictions with onset between 1981 and 1985 and then decreased consistently in subsequent onset periods through 1995–96. Thus, gang members in the newest gang problem jurisdictions were much less likely to be involved in drug sales than gang members in jurisdictions where gang problems began during the early to mid-1980s.

Gang Stereotypes

The characteristics of modern gangs contrast sharply with the stereotypical image of gangs that emerged in the 1980s and continues to predominate. From the 1920s through the 1970s, gang members were characterized mainly as young (11–22 years old) Hispanic or African American males who lived in lower class ghetto or barrio sections of the inner city (Klein, 1995; Miller, 1992; Spergel, 1995). In that period, gangs usually were viewed as racially and ethnically homogeneous, spontaneously organized, and authoritatively controlled fighting groups (Miller, 1992). Classic "rumbles" historically were the major form of gang fighting, but they gave way in the 1970s to forays by small armed and motorized bands. Most gang violence was motivated by honor or local turf defense and, to a lesser extent, control over facilities and areas and economic gain (Miller, 1992:118). Gang violence was not a major social concern (Klein, 1969).

In the mid- to late 1980s, this predominant gang stereotype was modified significantly by a California study in which researchers contended that the two major Los Angeles gangs, the Crips and Bloods, had become highly organized and entrepreneurial and were expanding their drug markets to other cities (Skolnick et al., 1988). Where these drug operations appeared, presumably, so did violent crime.

Practitioner's View: Gang Migration and Hybrid Gangs in Kansas City

Gangs began moving into the Midwest in the early 1980s, with Kansas City, MO, emerging as a textbook example of a locality experiencing gang migration. Located in almost the geographical center of the continental United States, Kansas City has approximately 5,000 documented gang members and affiliates and numerous

Chicago- and California-style gangs in the metropolitan area.[1] No single group has achieved dominance.

The Kansas City Police Department's Drug Enforcement Unit first encountered gang migration while investigating a new wave of drug entrepreneurs in the 1980s. By 1988, these trafficking suspects included confirmed members of the Crips and Bloods sets (subgroups) from the Los Angeles, CA, area. As the presence of the Crips and Bloods became increasingly pronounced in Kansas City, other law enforcement agencies in the Midwest began sharing similar gang intelligence information. Suddenly, Los Angeles Crips and Bloods were known to be dealing cocaine in most major midwestern cities, including Des Moines, IA; Minneapolis, MN; Oklahoma City, OK; Omaha, NE; and Wichita, KS. By 1990, the arrival of Chicago-based gang members in Kansas City was also confirmed through routine investigations of drug trafficking and homicides.

Although Kansas City has experienced gang migration, the area's larger gangs continue to be locally based hybrids that may not have any affiliations with migrant gang members. These groups exemplify the evolving modern gangs that are now increasingly common throughout the United States, particularly in suburban areas, small cities, and rural communities. In the past decade or more, Kansas City's hybrid gang members have adopted traditional gang culture, modified it with personal interpretations and agendas, and become much more of a criminal and societal problem to the community than any of the groups that have migrated into the area.

For example, in two sections of Kansas City, two different gangs operate as the Athens Park Boys (APB). These groups share the name with the original Athens Park Boys, a well-established Bloods set originating in Los Angeles County. Although both of the Kansas City APB gangs engage in criminal activities and antisocial behavior, they have no connection other than the shared name: one set is composed of African American teens on the east side of the city, and the other consists of Caucasian teens, primarily from affluent families in the suburbs. Each group seems to be unaware of its Kansas City counterpart, and neither set is connected to APB in California or any other jurisdiction. Because of their increasing membership and unique characteristics and culture, hybrid gangs (like Kansas City's APBs) warrant further examination.

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[1] According to 2000 U.S. Census projections, the total population of Kansas City, MO, is 443,277 and the population of the Kansas City metropolitan area is approximately 1.2 million.

Gang Migration

The expanded presence of gangs is often blamed on the relocation of members from one city to another, which is called gang migration. Some gangs are very transient and conduct their activities on a national basis. However, the sudden appearance of Rollin' 60s Crips graffiti in a public park in rural Iowa, for example, does not necessarily mean that the Los Angeles gang has set up a chapter in the community. Gang names are frequently copied, adopted, or passed on. In most instances, there is little or no real connection between local groups with the same name other than the name itself (Valdez,

2000:344).

Gang migration does occur, however. According to the 1999 National Youth Gang Survey, 18 percent of all youth gang members had migrated from another jurisdiction to the one in which they were residing (Egley, 2000). Although gang migration is stereotypically attributed to illegal activities such as drug franchising, expansion of criminal enterprises is not the principal driving force behind migration (Maxson, 1998). The most common reasons for migration are social considerations affecting individual gang members, including family relocation to improve the quality of life or to be near relatives and friends. Moreover, in the 1999 National Youth Gang Survey, the vast majority (83 percent) of law enforcement respondents agreed that the appearance of gang members outside of large cities in the 1990s was caused by the relocation of young people from central cities (Egley, 2000). Thus, the dispersion of the urban population to less populated areas contributed to the proliferation of gangs in suburban areas, small towns, and rural areas.

Law enforcement professionals may not be able to differentiate among local gangs that have adopted names of the same well-known gangs from other locales but have no real connection with each other until they begin to interact with gang members through interviews, debriefings, and other contacts. "Hybrid" versions will begin to display variations of the original gang, such as giving different reasons for opposing rival gangs or displaying certain colors. Investigators who take the time to cross-check their local gang intelligence with that of other agencies concerning gangs with identical names are likely to find some subtle and some glaring differences.

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Attachment C

OJJDP
JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN
June 2002

Modern-Day Youth Gangs

James C. Howell, Arlen Egley, Jr., and Debra K. Gleason

NCJ 191524

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A Message From OJJDP

From the time that youth gangs first came to public prominence in the United States, they have been associated with inner-city neighborhoods in major cities such as Chicago or Los Angeles.

The more recent proliferation of gangs into less traditional areas—smaller cities, towns, suburbs, and even rural communities—has led experts to question whether modern-day youth gangs differ significantly from their predecessors.

Drawing on data from the 1996 and 1998 National Youth Gang Surveys, the authors of this Bulletin compare the characteristics of gangs and gang members in jurisdictions with later onset of gang problems with those of gangs and gang members in jurisdictions with earlier onset of gang problems.

Their findings provide interesting insights into variations in gang problems based on time of onset. For example, gangs in jurisdictions with later onset of gang problems tend to have younger members and a larger proportion of Caucasian and African American members than their counterparts in jurisdictions with earlier onset of gang problems. Modern-day gangs are also less involved in violent crimes and drug trafficking than their predecessors.

The data reviewed in this Bulletin reveal systematic differences between communities with earlier and later onset

Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

gang problems. These differences have important implications for responding to the challenges that gangs pose to our Nation.

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National Youth Gang Center

As part of its comprehensive, coordinated response to America's gang problem, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funds the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC). NYGC assists State and local jurisdictions in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies. NYGC coordinates activities of the OJJDP Gang Consortium, a group of Federal agencies, gang program representatives, and service providers that works to coordinate gang information and programs. NYGC also provides training and technical assistance for OJJDP's Rural Gang, Gang-Free Schools, and Gang-Free Communities Initiatives. For more information, contact:

National Youth Gang Center
P.O. Box 12729
Tallahassee, FL 32317
850–385–0600
850–386–5356 (fax)
nygc@iir.com
www.iir.com/nygc

Introduction

The proliferation of youth gangs since 1980 has fueled the public's fear and magnified possible misconceptions about youth gangs. To address the mounting concern about youth gangs, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) Youth Gang Series delves into many of the key issues related to youth gangs. The series considers issues such as gang migration, gang growth, female involvement with gangs, homicide, drugs and violence, and the needs of communities and youth who live in the presence of youth gangs.

From the time their presence was first noted in the United States, youth gangs[1] have been most prevalent in the central cities of large urban areas. Historically, gang members have been primarily young adult males from homogeneous lower-class, inner-city, ghetto or barrio neighborhoods (Klein, 1995; Miller, 1992; Moore, 1978, 1991; Spergel, 1995). Traditionally, gangs have been racially/ethnically segregated and have been actively involved in a variety of criminal activities, including drug trafficking. The spread of gangs beyond central cities in the 1980s and 1990s (Miller, 2001; National Youth Gang Center [NYGC], 1999a, 1999b, 2000) raises the question of whether the newer gangs forming in cities, small towns, and suburban and rural areas are different from the traditional inner-city gangs, as has been suggested by Curry (1999); Howell and Gleason (1999); Howell, Moore, and Egley (2001); and Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist (2001).

Background and Data Source

The 1996 National Youth Gang Survey[2] (NYGC, 1999a) asked respondents who reported the presence of a youth gang problem: "In approximately what year did gangs begin to pose a problem in your jurisdiction?" The average year of onset[3] was 1989 for larger cities (populations of 25,000 or more), 1990 for suburban counties, 1992 for smaller cities, and 1993 for rural counties. Of course, a number of jurisdictions said their gang problem began much earlier—84 jurisdictions (including 63 larger cities) said their gang problem began before 1981, and 72 (including 54 larger cities) said their problem began between 1981 and 1985. Of all jurisdictions that responded to the year-of-onset question in 1996, 53 percent reported onset during 1991–96 (20 percent in 1991–92, 25 percent in 1993–94, and 8 percent in 1995–96), 33 percent during 1986– 90, 6 percent during 1981–85, and 8 percent before 1981.

The analysis reported in this Bulletin compares the characteristics of gangs and gang members in jurisdictions with later (1991–96) versus earlier (before 1991) onset of gang problems. Where appropriate, comparisons are also made between jurisdictions with latest (1995– 96) and earliest (before 1981) onset. All of the data are unweighted and thus do not represent national estimates.[4]

Findings

Population Size and Area Type

Table 1 compares the onset of gang problems by population size and shows that later onset is more common in less populated jurisdictions. Nearly three-fourths (73 percent) of cities with

populations of 250,000 or more reported onset of gang problems before 1991. A majority (54 percent) of jurisdictions with populations between 50,000 and 99,999 reported onset during 1986–90 or earlier. In contrast, a large majority (61 percent) of jurisdictions with populations between 25,000 and 49,999 reported onset during 1991–92 or later. Jurisdictions with populations of less than 25,000 were especially likely to report onset during 1993–96; nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the smallest jurisdictions (less than 10,000 population) reported onset of gang problems during this period.

Table 1: Year of Gang Problem Onset, by Population Size, 1996 Survey

	Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Onset of Gang Problems						
Population Size	**Before 1981**	**1981–85**	**1986–90**	**1991–92**	**1993–94**	**1995–96**	**All Periods**
250,000 or more (n=86)	21	14	38	12	11	5	100
100,000–249,999 (n=155)	14	12	43	16	13	3	100
50,000–99,999 (n=279)	9	7	38	22	18	7	100
25,000–49,999 (n=382)	4	5	30	24	29	8	100
10,000–24,999 (n=123)	2	2	20	21	42	13	100
Less than 10,000 (n=96)	4	2	18	13	42	22	100

Note: Percentages within each population size category may not total 100 because of rounding.

Table 2 compares the onset of gang problems by area type: larger cities, smaller cities, suburban counties, and rural counties. A majority of larger cities (55 percent) reported onset of gang problems before 1991, whereas majorities of smaller cities (73 percent), suburban counties (61 percent), and rural counties (82 percent) reported onset during 1991 or later. Rural counties tended to have the latest onset of gang problems, with a majority (65 percent) reporting onset during 1993–96. A smaller majority (51 percent) of smaller cities reported onset during 1993–96. Compared with rural counties and smaller cities, suburban counties tended to have slightly earlier onset of gang problems, with the majority (52 percent) reporting onset during 1991–94.

Table 2: Year of Gang Problem Onset, by Area Type, 1996 Survey

	Percentage of Jurisdictions Reporting Onset of Gang Problems						
Area Type*	**Before 1981**	**1981–85**	**1986–90**	**1991–92**	**1993–94**	**1995–96**	**All Periods**
Larger city (n=669)	9	8	38	20	18	6	100
Smaller city (n=79)	5	3	20	22	32	19	100
Suburban county (n=265)	6	6	28	20	32	9	100
Rural county (n=108)	2	1	16	17	46	19	100

Note: Percentages within each population size category may not total 100 because of rounding.
* Larger cities are those with populations of 25,000 or more. Smaller cities are those with populations between 2,500 and 24,999.

Demographic Characteristics

Age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Tables 3, 4, and 5 show the age, gender, and racial/ethnic composition of gangs by year of gang problem onset.[5] Compared with gangs in earlier onset jurisdictions, gangs in later onset jurisdictions tended to have younger members, a slightly larger proportion of female members, and a much larger proportion of Caucasian and African American members.

Table 3: Age of Gang Members, by Year of Gang Problem Onset, 1996 Survey

	Average Percentage of Gang Members			
Year of Onset	**Under age 15**	**Age 15–17**	**Age 18–24**	**Over age 24**
Before 1981 (n=78)	21	38	31	10
1981–85 (n=56)	20	41	31	9
1986–90 (n=303)	21	45	29	6
1991–92 (n=195)	21	47	27	5
1993–94 (n=224)	24	47	26	3
1995–96 (n=74)	22	54	23	1

Note: Percentages within each onset category may not total 100 because of rounding. In tables 3–5 (Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5), the number of jurisdictions (n) varies because some respondents did not answer all of the survey's demographic questions. The percentages listed were estimated by reporting jurisdictions.

Table 4: Gender of Gang Members, by Year of Gang Problem Onset, 1996 Survey

	Average Percentage of Gang Members	
Year of Onset	**Male**	**Female**
Before 1981 (n=79)	90	10
1981–85 (n=64)	89	11
1986–90 (n=337)	89	11
1991–92 (n=202)	90	10
1993–94 (n=247)	88	12
1995–96 (n=75)	86	14

Note: In tables 3–5 (Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5), the number of jurisdictions (n) varies because some respondents did not answer all of the survey's demographic questions. The percentages listed were estimated by reporting jurisdictions.

Table 5: Race/Ethnicity of Gang Members, by Year of Gang Problem Onset, 1996 Survey					
	Average Percentage of Gang Members				
Year of Onset	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Caucasian	Other
Before 1981 (n=75)	21	58	7	10	3
1981–85 (n=62)	34	44	5	15	2
1986–90 (n=319)	35	34	7	24	1
1991–92 (n=198)	32	23	6	37	2
1993–94 (n=251)	30	23	5	39	2
1995–96 (n=80)	36	16	3	40	4
Note: Percentages within each onset category may not total 100 because of rounding. In tables 3–5 (Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5), the number of jurisdictions (n) varies because some respondents did not answer all of the survey's demographic questions. The percentages listed were estimated by reporting jurisdictions.					

As shown in table 3, gangs in later onset jurisdictions had about the same proportion of younger members (younger than age 15) as gangs in earlier onset jurisdictions, a much larger proportion of members ages 15–17, and a much smaller proportion of older members (18 or older). Thus, gangs in later onset jurisdictions included a greater proportion of juveniles (i.e., individuals younger than age 18). This finding is especially evident when comparing the earliest (before 1981) and latest (1995–96) onset jurisdictions.

As shown in table 4, females represented a much smaller proportion of gang members than males, regardless of when a jurisdiction's gang problem began. However, jurisdictions with the latest onset of gang problems (1995-96) had the largest proportion of female gang members (14 percent)—2 to 4 percent greater than the female proportion for other onset groups.

As shown in table 5, racial/ethnic differences between gangs in later versus earlier onset jurisdictions were even more extreme than age differences. In jurisdictions with onset before 1981, a majority of gang members were Hispanic (58 percent). In contrast, in the later onset jurisdictions (1991 and later), Caucasians were the predominant group, followed by African Americans.

Multiethnic/multiracial gangs. The 1996 survey asked: "What percentage of the gangs in your jurisdiction are multiethnic or multiracial?" As shown in table 6, earlier onset jurisdictions reported a much smaller proportion of racially mixed gangs than later onset jurisdictions. Such gangs represented about one-third (32 percent) of all gangs in jurisdictions with onset before 1981, compared with more than half (56 percent) in jurisdictions with onset during 1991-92, 50 percent in those with 1993-94 onset, and 40 percent in those with 1995-96 onset.

In a more specific question, the 1998 survey asked respondents to estimate the percentage of gangs in their jurisdictions with a "significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups." Table 6 shows that such gangs were far more prevalent in later onset jurisdictions than in earlier onset jurisdictions. Only 18 percent of the gangs in jurisdictions with onset before 1981 had a significant racial/ethnic mixture, in contrast with 55 percent in jurisdictions with 1991–92 onset, 48 percent in those with 1993–94 onset, and 47 percent in those with 1995–96 onset. As in the

1996 survey, gangs with a significant multiethnic/multiracial mixture were most commonly reported in jurisdictions with onset of gang problems in 1991–92.

Criminal Involvement

Firearms. The 1998 survey asked agencies to estimate how frequently gang members in their jurisdictions used firearms in assault crimes: "often," "sometimes," "rarely," or "not at all." More than half of all respondents (53 percent) said gang members used firearms often or sometimes. As shown in figure 1, firearm use by gang members in assault crimes was much less common in later onset jurisdictions than in earlier onset jurisdictions. A large majority (84 percent) of agencies in the earliest onset group (before 1981) reported that gangs often or sometimes used firearms in assault crimes, compared with only 32 percent of agencies in the latest onset group (1995–96)—a difference of 52 percent.

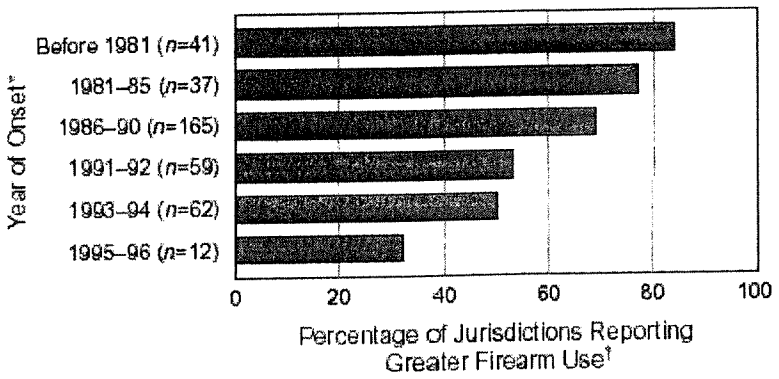
Table 6: Presence of Racially/Ethnically Mixed Gangs, by Year of Gang Problem Onset, 1996 and 1998 Surveys

	Jurisdictions Reporting Mixed Gangs				Average Percentage of Mixed Gangs Reported	
	Number		Percent			
Year of Onset*	1996	1998	1996	1998	1996	1998
Before 1981	56	29	88	52	32	18
1981–85	47	41	80	75	45	38
1986–90	268	212	89	83	49	44
1991–92	145	103	88	82	56	55
1993–94	176	106	85	75	50	48
1995–96	44	31	75	78	40	47

Note: In 1996, respondents were asked "What percentage of the gangs in your jurisdiction are multiethnic or multiracial?" In 1998, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of gangs in their jurisdictions with a "significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups."
* Because 1998 survey respondents were not asked when their gang problems began, the classification of 1998 respondents by onset category is based on 1996 responses to the year-of-onset question.

Drug trafficking. The 1996 survey asked respondents to estimate the percentage of drug sales in their jurisdictions that involved gang members and the proportion of drug distribution that was controlled or managed by gangs. As shown in table 7, the average share of drug sales involving gang members was 45 percent for the earliest onset jurisdictions (before 1981) and 35 percent for the latest onset jurisdictions (1995–96)—a difference of 10 percent. The same comparison for gang control of drug distribution shows a 30-percent difference between the earliest and latest onset groups (41 percent and 11 percent, respectively). Thus, both gang member involvement in drug sales and gang control of drug distribution were lower in the late-onset localities, but the difference was much greater for the latter measure. In other words, gangs in late-onset localities were, relatively speaking, less involved in drug distribution than in drug sales.

Figure 1: Firearm Use in Assault Crimes by Gangs, by Year of Gang Problem Onset, 1998 Survey



* Because 1998 survey respondents were not asked when their gang problems began, the classification of 1998 respondents by onset category is based on 1996 responses to the year-of-onset question.

† Combined response for use "often" and "sometimes."

The 1998 survey asked respondents to estimate the percentage of gang members in their jurisdictions who were involved in drug sales. As shown in table 7, the earliest onset jurisdictions reported an average of 83 percent of gang members involved in drug sales, compared with an average of 65 percent for the latest onset jurisdictions—a difference of 18 percent.

Homicides. The 1998 survey also asked respondents to report the number of gang-related homicides in their jurisdictions. Figure 2 shows the percentage of jurisdictions in each gang problem onset period reporting no gang-related homicides, one or two such homicides, and three or more. The patterns for the number of gang homicides relative to gang problem onset period were most consistent in jurisdictions reporting either no homicides or three or more homicides. One-third (35 percent) of jurisdictions with gang problem onset before 1981 had no gang homicides. With one exception, this proportion consistently increased over the onset periods to 85 percent in the latest period (1995– 96)—a difference of 50 percent between the earliest and latest periods. Conversely, the proportion of jurisdictions with three or more gang homicides decreased overall from 40 percent in the earliest onset period to only 4 percent in the latest onset period—a difference of 36 percent. The pattern was somewhat less consistent for jurisdictions reporting one or two gang-related homicides.

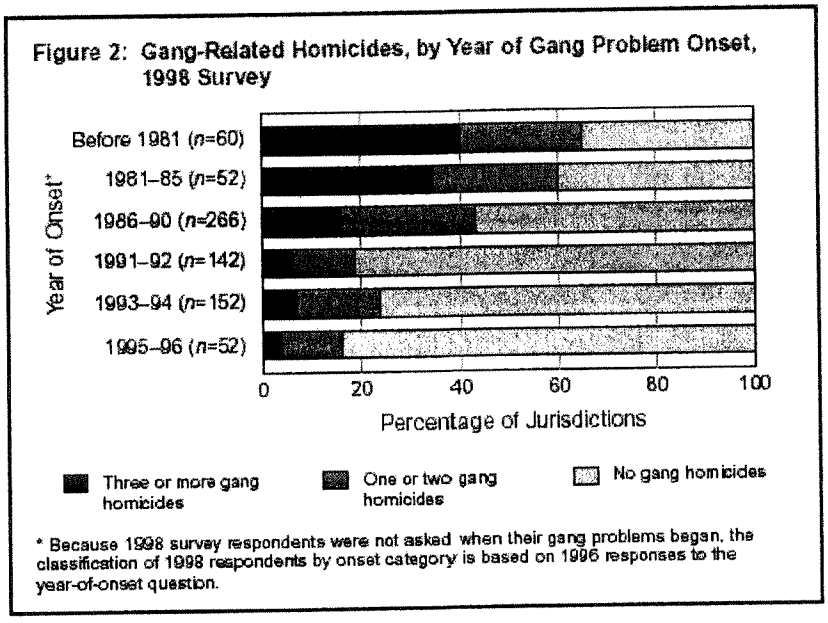
Although the proportion of jurisdictions reporting one or two homicides decreased between the earliest and latest onset periods, the proportion is slightly larger for jurisdictions with onset during 1986–90 than for those with onset before 1981 or during 1981–85 and is also slightly larger for those with onset during 1993–94 than for those with onset during 1991–92. In general, however, gang-related homicides were far less prevalent in jurisdictions with later onset of gang problems than in jurisdictions with earlier onset.

Table 7: Gang Involvement in Drug Trafficking, by Year of Gang Problem Onset, 1996 and 1998 Surveys

	1996			1998	
Year of Onset*	Average Percentage of Drug Sales Involving Gang Members	Jurisdictions Reporting Majority Control of Drug Distribution by Gangs		Jurisdictions Reporting Greater Involvement of Gang Members in Drug Sales	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Before 1981	45 (n=69)	76	41	43	83
1981–85	48 (n=60)	63	48	34	73
1986–90	47 (n=278)	314	37	190	81
1991–92	43 (n=162)	185	26	72	64
1993–94	41 (n=220)	235	24	89	71
1995–96	35 (n=52)	73	11	26	65

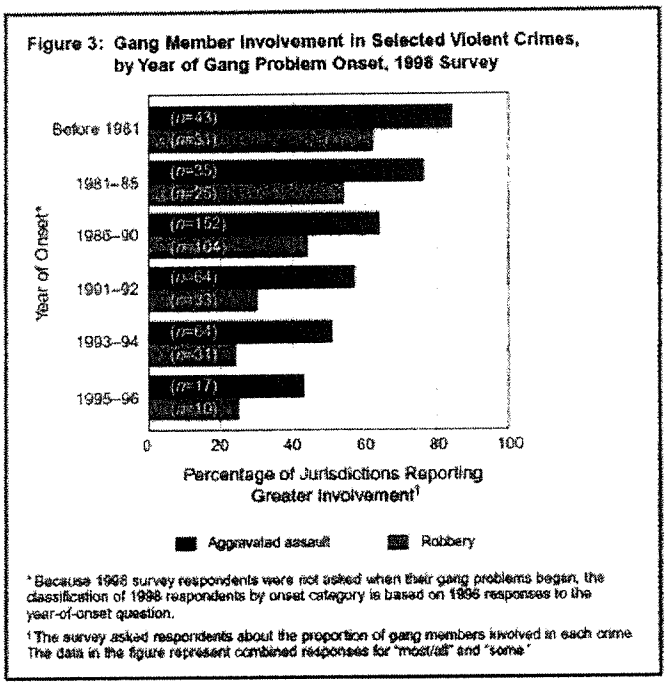
Note: In 1996, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of drug sales in their jurisdictions that involved gang members and the proportion of drug distribution that was controlled or managed by gangs (for the second question, the values in the table reflect a combined response for "more than half" and "all"). In 1998, respondents were asked to estimate the proportion of gang members involved in drug sales (the values in the table reflect a combined response for "some" and "most/all").

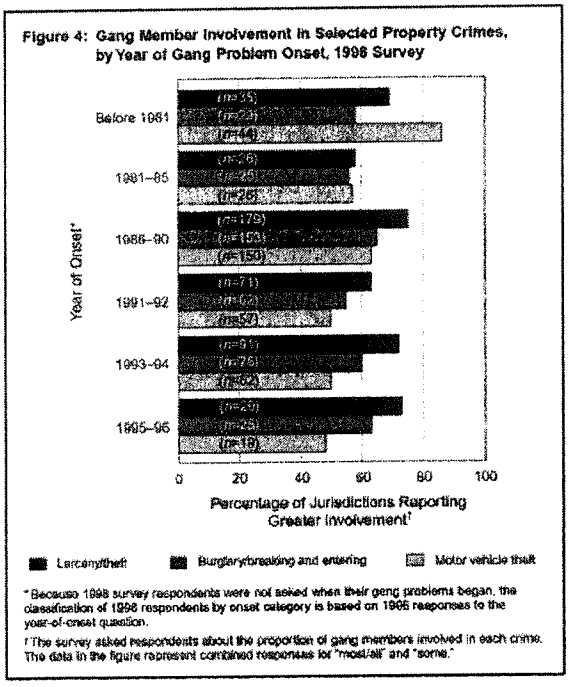
* Because 1998 survey respondents were not asked when their gang problems began, the classification of 1998 respondents by onset category is based on 1996 responses to the year-of-onset question.



Other crimes. The 1998 survey asked what proportions of gang members were involved in aggravated assault, robbery, larceny/theft, burglary/breaking and entering, and motor vehicle theft: "most/all" (75–100 percent), "some" (26–74 percent), "few" (1–25 percent), or "none" (0 percent). Figure 3 shows that the percentage of agencies reporting involvement of most/all or some gang members in the two violent crimes (aggravated assault and robbery) in 1998 was consistently lower in the latest onset jurisdictions than in the earliest onset jurisdictions—a difference of 41 percent for aggravated assault and 37 percent for robbery. However, as shown in

figure 4, a different pattern emerges for property crimes (larceny/theft, burglary/ breaking and entering, and motor vehicle theft). Compared with the earliest onset jurisdictions, the percentage of latest onset jurisdictions reporting involvement of most/all or some gang members was 38 percent lower for motor vehicle theft but 5 percent higher for burglary/breaking and entering and 4 percent higher for larceny/theft.





Thus, the 1998 crime measures indicate that gang members in the latest onset jurisdictions were most likely to be involved in burglary/breaking and entering and larceny/theft. Involvement of most/all or some gang members in these two property offenses was reported by 63 and 73 percent of the latest onset jurisdictions, respectively. Fewer than half of the latest onset jurisdictions reported similar levels of involvement for the other three criminal activities measured.

Summary and Discussion

Law enforcement agency responses to the National Youth Gang Survey regarding the year of onset of gang problems revealed a cascading pattern (of earlier to later onset) from the largest to the smallest localities and from urban to rural areas. The analysis reported in this Bulletin contrasts gangs in earlier and later onset jurisdictions. As observed by law enforcement agencies, gangs in newer gang problem jurisdictions were qualitatively different from traditional gangs in jurisdictions where gang problems began much earlier. Gangs in the late-onset jurisdictions had younger members, slightly more females, and more of a racial/ethnic mixture; were less involved in drug trafficking; and were less involved in violent crimes, including homicides. The later onset jurisdictions were most likely to be in rural counties, smaller cities, and suburban counties with populations of less than 50,000.

Although Caucasians were the predominant racial/ethnic group in later onset (1991 or later) localities, racial/ethnic mixing may be a defining characteristic of such gangs. In the 1998 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGC, 2000), respondents estimated that the membership of more than one-third of their gangs consisted of a significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups. Smaller cities had the largest proportion of these mixed gangs (54 percent of all gangs in smaller cities), followed by suburban counties (45 percent), and rural counties (42 percent). Larger cities had the smallest proportion of mixed gangs (32 percent). Another study—an 11-city survey conducted by Esbensen and colleagues (1999)—found that gender mixing also was common: 92 percent of eighth grade gang members said that both boys and girls belonged to their gangs. It is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of sites from which Esbensen and colleagues drew their sample reported fairly late onset of gang problems (1982–95) in the National Youth Gang Survey.

The National Youth Gang Survey results reported in this Bulletin are particularly striking with respect to gang member involvement in criminal activity. As shown in figures 1–4 (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4), gang members in the earliest onset localities not only were involved in property crimes but also were very likely to be involved in violent crimes (homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, and use of firearms). In contrast, gang members in the latest onset localities were most likely to be involved in the property crimes of burglary/breaking and entering and larceny/ theft, although they were far less likely to be involved in motor vehicle theft.

As shown in table 7, gang member involvement in drug trafficking was lower in the later onset jurisdictions than in the earlier onset jurisdictions. However, in the later onset jurisdictions, the level of individual member involvement in drug sales was greater than the overall level of gang control of drug distribution (see also Howell and Gleason, 1999).

It may be that the gangs in the later onset jurisdictions are in the early stages of development, from the standpoint of gang criminal involvement. Gangs in these jurisdictions tended to be far more involved in property crimes and individual drug sales than in violent crimes or drug distribution.

Do gangs move through patterns of offending as they mature? Do they progress from involvement in property crimes to involvement in violent crimes? A few gang studies have produced evidence of this kind of progression (Huff, 1998; Palacios, 1996; Venkatesh, 1996). Studies of gang members also offer evidence that gang involvement increases the likelihood of self-reported violence during adolescence (Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Hill et al., 1996; Thornberry et al., 1993). Individuals who belonged to gangs for more than a year were much more likely to be involved in serious and violent offenses than gang members who belonged for a year or less (Hill et al., 1996; Thornberry et al., in press). This finding may be related to the increased bonding of individual members to their gangs (Lynskey et al., 2000). In addition, Curry (2000) found evidence of continuity between being involved in a gang at a young age and having a police record later. The intervention-related implications of these research findings, which suggest that as gangs mature the criminal involvement of their members grows more serious, are discussed below.

David Starbuck (a former supervisor of the Kansas City, MO, Police Department's Gang Unit) and colleagues characterize many of the newer gangs as having a "hybrid" gang culture (Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). By this they mean that many of the gangs that have sprung up relatively recently throughout the country may not follow the same traditional rules or methods of operation as their predecessors from Los Angeles, CA, or Chicago, IL. For example, these newer gangs may adopt symbols from both Chicago- and Los Angeles-based gangs, they may not have an allegiance to a traditional "color," they may change the gang name, members may change their affiliation from one gang to another or belong to more than one gang, and two or more gangs may suddenly merge and form a new gang. Starbuck and colleagues contend that this hybrid gang culture is more prevalent in communities that had no gang problem prior to the 1980s or 1990s.

Program Implications

As documented in this analysis, recently formed gangs may not fit the stereotype of traditional gangs in cities with chronic gang problems. Jurisdictions with relatively recent onset of gang activity need to assess their gang problem carefully. Any community that discovers it has a gang problem should develop a continuum of prevention, intervention, and (if needed) suppression strategies. By taking action as soon as a gang problem is discovered, it may be possible to interrupt the gangs' developmental progression from involvement in general delinquency and property crimes to involvement in serious, violent activities.

A community's gang problem may begin with school-centered gangs, which, according to surveys of students, tend not to be extensively involved in criminal activity (Howell and Lynch, 2000). School-based prevention programs could be particularly useful in countering the further development of such gangs. A long-term evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, a school-based prevention curriculum, showed an overall beneficial program effect (Esbensen et al., 2001). In communities that have gangs in the early stages of development, it is especially appropriate for prevention programs and social services agencies to intervene at the individual level with the youngest gang members and other at-risk youth (Curry, 2000). The Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach program, operated by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, is a promising intervention initiative (Thornberry and Burch, 1997). Even in the early stages of gang development, communities may determine that some gang suppression activities are needed to protect the public. The Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) is a good multijurisdictional model that integrates law enforcement, probation, and prosecution efforts (Capizzi, Cook, and Schumacher, 1995). A combination of such strategies may reduce future involvement of adolescents in gangs and impede the development of embryonic gangs.

The National Youth Gang Center (2001a) has developed a protocol that communities can use in assessing their gang problem. The protocol is applicable to communities of all sizes and characteristics. The National Youth Gang Center (2001b) also has prepared a planning guide to assist communities in developing a plan to implement the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Comprehensive Gang Model. The model addresses the youth gang problem through five interrelated strategies: community mobilization; social intervention, including street outreach; provision of opportunities; suppression/social control; and

organizational change and development. Based on research and community experiences, the model is multifaceted and multilayered and involves individual youth, families, the gang structure, agencies, and the community. A menu of promising and effective program options is also available (Howell, 2000).

Starbuck and colleagues stress how important it is for law enforcement agencies—both large and small—to understand the continuing changes in the dynamics of gangs (Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). Thus, it is imperative that law enforcement agencies continually update staff training curriculums and monitor the specific gang culture in their own jurisdictions. In addressing gang problems, law enforcement agencies should keep in mind that no single response will work universally. What succeeds in one city may have little effect in another. Each response must be based on an accurate assessment of the local problem, updated intelligence, application of all community resources, and a realistic appraisal of how to gauge success. It is also essential that local efforts to prevent and combat gangs include every available community agency in a comprehensive approach. Without such an approach, efforts to address gang problems are quite likely to meet with frustration.

Endnotes

[1] Throughout this Bulletin, the term "gang" refers to youth gangs.

[2] The 1996 National Youth Gang Survey was sent to a sample of 3,024 police and sheriff's departments in October 1997. It consisted of a 14-item questionnaire that elicited information on a variety of gang-associated topics, including drug-related activity (see NYGC, 2000). This sample, which has been surveyed annually, includes the following: (1) all police departments serving cities with populations of 25,000 or more, (2) a randomly selected sample of police departments serving cities with populations between 2,500 and 24,999, (3) all suburban county police and sheriff's departments, and (4) a randomly selected sample of rural county police and sheriff's departments. See *1996 National Youth Gang Survey* (NYGC, 1999a) for detailed information on sample selection, survey methodology, and results of analyses. The response rate for the 1996 survey was 87 percent. Of the 2,629 jurisdictions that responded to the survey, 1,385 (53 percent) reported gang problems. Among these, 1,121 agencies responded to the question regarding the year in which their jurisdiction's gang problem began. These 1,121 respondents to the 1996 survey are the primary basis for the analyses in this Bulletin. To present the most current information, pertinent data from the 1998 survey also are analyzed, where appropriate. The response rate for the 1998 survey was 88 percent, and 48 percent of the responding jurisdictions reported gang problems.

[3] In this Bulletin, "onset" refers to the year in which a jurisdiction's gang problem began. A total of 81 percent of the 1996 survey respondents who reported a gang problem answered the year-of-onset question. Because 1998 survey respondents were not asked when their gang problems began, analyses of 1998 data use 1996 responses to the year-of-onset question to classify respondents by onset.

[4] Because this analysis focuses on identifying differences in gang characteristics in different jurisdictions given various onset periods (rather than on generating gang prevalence data), the use of weighted data was not deemed appropriate.

[5] In table 3, table 4, and table 5, the number of respondents varies for the demographic variables because some respondents did not answer all of the demographic questions. The analysis of demographic characteristics is based on data from the 1996 survey. Analysis of data from the 1998 survey, with year-of-onset classification based on responses to the 1996 survey (see endnote 3), yielded comparable results, which are not presented here.

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Managing Editor
Jim Donovan

Program Manager
Nancy Bowman

Law Clerk
Carolyn Perozzi

Internet Address
www.usdoj.gov/usao/reading_room/foiamanuals.html

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GANGS

In This Issue

Understanding Gangs and Gang Mentality: Acquiring Evidence of the Gang Conspiracy

Donald Lyddane
Intelligence Analyst
Safe Streets and Gang Unit
FBI Headquarters

I. Introduction

The following lyrical excerpts, taken from a CD entitled "Claiming My City," represent true-life proclamations of two prominent Washington, D.C. gang members. The lyrics, as recorded by them, verbalize their attitudes, motivations, and lifestyles.

> *I got dope and coke and all and I'm selling it... I'm killin' motherf***ers for the hell of it.... I'm the little one, but my gun's a lot bigger... I can't wait to read about another dead n**ga in the g**damn obituary.*

CLAIMING MY CITY (Montana Records) (1992).

One of those gang members, an executive producer for the record company, was reputed to be a significant drug dealer at a local public housing development. The other gang member was a primary enforcer for the gang that controlled the public housing development. His reputation as a killer was well-known to local law enforcement officers and other gang members. That gang member was later convicted of murder and is serving a life sentence.

In today's society, many gang members compose and put their true-life experiences into lyrical form. Many are able to record their lyrics at local recording studios, produce CDs, DVDs, and videos, and distribute these items to local music stores by using the proceeds of illegal criminal activities. Law enforcement officials must remain mindful of such money laundering schemes and the opportunities to obtain inculpatory evidence in gang-related investigations and cases. It is equally important to recognize that the lyrics demonstrate that the gangster lifestyle has become mainstream. It is now popular to be a "gangsta," the contemporary idiom for gangster.

A song like "Claiming My City" gives the reader a glimpse into the "gangsta" mentality. This article will explore gang mentality and the subsequent, anticipated behaviors of gang members that investigators and prosecutors may exploit to collect information and evidence in gang investigations.

II. Background

A vast number of urban, suburban, and rural communities are plagued by street gangs who control drug markets in many of their neighborhoods, engage in violent crime, and create an atmosphere of fear within those communities. Crimes committed by gang members are not restricted to gang-sanctioned offenses. The lifestyle of drug trafficking, violence, and greed has created individuals whose value system is counter to that of society at large. Gang members will engage in criminal activities with little regard for the lives or safety of others. This lifestyle has contributed to increased drug trafficking, violent crime, and other criminal activity, which negatively impacts the quality of life in many communities. Neighborhood-based gangs often control all, or at least a portion of, the retail drug distribution in those areas. Their "retail labor force," those who sell drugs hand-to-hand at the street level, often are the neighborhood teenagers who join gangs for several reasons.

For many teens, the primary motive to become a gang member is money. However, gang membership and lifestyle go beyond economic motivation. Identity and recognition are powerful motivational factors to many teenagers. Many gang trends such as "colors," hand signs, graffiti,

"gang writings," and tattoos, among other things are directly related to the desire of the gang member to be identified with, and recognized as, a member of a particular gang. To many, a gang constitutes a type of extended family. Gang identification symbols are merely visible signs of a powerful group identity and unity, which are built on the simplest of bases–loyalty to fellow members and to gang territory.

The news media and entertainment industry have sensationalized gang crimes and the gang lifestyle to the point that it has become part of mainstream America. This has contributed to the emergence, migration, and growth of a popular "gangsta" subculture. Music, magazines, movies, and the Internet serve as training vehicles on how to be a "gangsta." Increasingly, young teens are at great risk of being seduced by, and recruited into, this way of life. The promises of respect, money, expensive clothes, cars, and other inducements, put youths from all backgrounds, neighborhoods, and income levels at risk.

This subculture has spread beyond the borders of the United States. For example, several years ago authorities in Cape Town, South Africa, who were struggling with a gang problem, invited gang expert, Sergeant Wes McBride of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (now retired) to visit their city and examine the problem. After carefully evaluating the situation, which included interviews with Cape Town gang members, Sergeant McBride concluded, "they are just like our gangs." *See* Sergeant Wesley D. McBride, Remarks at the Columbus Ohio, Effective Strategies for a Limited English Proficient (LEP) Community Conference (Aug. 31, 2005). He reported that the gangs were influenced by American music and films and emulated the American gang subculture. One gang even called itself the "Americans." *Id.*

It is no accident that gang styles of music, language, and clothing have made a considerable impact on popular youth culture. As previously mentioned, gangs represent a powerful group identity, and the members are surrounded with the appealing aura of outlaw danger. The wearisome and cruel reality of gang life rarely matches the fantasy, yet the power of the myth remains undiminished.

The vast majority of gangs in the United States are community or neighborhood-based and adversely impact small geographical areas. Local gangs can be just as violent and dangerous, if not more so, than nationally-recognized gangs. Some gangs, however, rapidly grow in size and sophistication, becoming multijurisdictional, even international in nature, and can adversely impact countless communities across this and other nations. Some prominent outlaw motorcycle gangs have evolved into international organized crime enterprises. Many prison gangs, such as the California Mexican Mafia, continue to evolve into sophisticated criminal enterprises, which control the criminal activities of street gangs. Nationally recognized gangs, such as the Bloods, Crips, Mara Salvatrucha 13, 18th Street, Gangster Disciples, Almighty Latin Kings and Queens Nation, and Vice Lords Nation continue to demonstrate a propensity for violence and the ability to migrate and establish criminal networks in multiple communities.

III. Gang definition

What is a gang? What is the difference between a crew and a mob? What is the difference between a mob and a gang? Are gangs criminal enterprises? Can a "loose-knit" local crew be a criminal enterprise? If a group of individuals *is involved in criminal activity*, but has no initiation rituals or outward signs of self-identification, such as tattoos, hand signs, or graffiti, is it a gang? If a group *is not engaged in criminal activity*, but has initiation rituals and powerful self-identification symbols, is it a gang? Because of the diversity in gangs, gang definitions have been debated for decades, yet no clear national consensus has ever been reached. There is no standard national definition of a gang. Therefore, definitions can change from one law enforcement jurisdiction to another. One common criterion used in virtually every gang definition, however, is that gang members are involved in continuing criminal activity.

Many police departments have no formal mechanism in place to identify and document the gangs operating within their jurisdiction. Therefore, statistics on the numbers of gangs, gang members, and gang crime are often underreported and, thus, not accurate. The absence of a universal definition for gangs and the lack of accurate statistics impact intelligence collection and sharing, target selection, prosecution, and overall program management.

Gangs vary greatly in size, geography, criminal sophistication, modus operandi, and their impact on the community or communities. There is great diversity in gang membership–all races and ethnic backgrounds are included.

- There are white, black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American gangs.
- There are outlaw motorcycle gangs.
- Immigrant gangs, youth gangs, drug gangs, intercity drug trafficking organizations, prison gangs, and suburban and rural gangs also exist.

Please note that the word "gang" may be used interchangeably with a variety of similar names, including chapter, clique, club, crew, faction, mob, posse, and set.

The term "street gang" is the term preferred by many local law enforcement agencies. This term includes both juveniles and adults, and designates the location of gangs, as well as their criminal behavior. A street gang may be defined as a group that forms an allegiance based on various social needs and engages in acts injurious to public health and safety. Members of street gangs engage in, and have a history of engaging in, gang-focused criminal activity, either individually or collectively. They create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community. Violence, random or directed, that benefits the members, the enterprise, the criminal activity, and the security of a gang's territory, are key aspects to violent street gangs.

Interestingly, another definition of a gang is provided in a federal sentencing enhancement statute.

> "Criminal street gang" means an ongoing group, club, organization, or association of 5 or more persons--
>
> **(A)** that has as 1 of its primary purposes the commission of 1 or more of the criminal offenses described in subsection (c) (particular narcotic and violence-related crimes);
>
> **(B)** the members of which engage, or have engaged within the past 5 years, in a continuing series of offenses described in subsection (c); and
>
> **(C)** the activities of which affect interstate or foreign commerce.

18 U.S.C. § 521(a).

The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (NAGIA) recommended the following gang definition in its 2005 Gang Threat Assessment:

> A group or association of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Criminal activity includes juvenile acts that if committed by an adult would be a crime.

See 2005 Gang Threat Assessment (NAGIA 2005), *54, available at* http://www.nagia.org/PDFs/2005_national_gang_threat_assessment.pdf.

In a publication by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the FBI defines violent gang criminal enterprise as "a criminal enterprise having an organizational structure, acting as a continuing criminal conspiracy, which employs violence and any other criminal activity to sustain the enterprise." Violent Crimes and Major Offenders Section, *An Introduction to Violent Street Gangs in the United States,* (2d ed. 1999). (This publication is available only for distribution within the law enforcement community; *See* http://www.iir.com/nygc/youthGangDoc/7_justice3.htm.).

Figure 1 Cash

A criminal enterprise can be described as any union or group of individuals associated in fact, although not a legal entity. The fact that the individuals are engaged in a pattern of criminal activity together constitutes a criminal enterprise.

Being "loose knit" does not preclude the group from being a criminal enterprise. The use of gang identifiers, such as initiations, hand signs, "colors," tattoos, gang rituals, signs, and symbols are not prerequisites for being considered a gang by the FBI.

Figure 2 Gangster with Cash

IV. Criminal sophistication

Gangs vary by levels of criminal sophistication, and, without intervention, every gang and every gang member will likely evolve in criminal sophistication. The rate of evolution is based on several factors, including: 1) the strategic vision of one or more of the prominent gang members, 2) criminal opportunities, 3) development of criminal associations, and 4) the frequency in which the gang networks with other criminal contacts and gang associates.

Many gangs (no matter the name of the gang) are criminally unsophisticated. These gangs may be involved in petty offenses and nuisance crimes. The members of such gangs may seek self-identification through style of dress or other incorporated gang symbols. They may even assume the name of a nationally recognized gang such as "Crips." (They take such a name because they think, literally, "Crips are bad, we're bad, [therefore,] we're Crips.") Yet such a gang has no criminal associations outside its small organization and its members often lack vision. Such gangs may be effectively addressed through local intervention techniques or by local street-level law enforcement action. However, if left unchecked, this group will likely grow in criminal sophistication as its members become more savvy and engage in more serious crimes.

V. Gang mentality

Gangs are tremendously diverse in make-up and criminal sophistication. What commonalities can possibly exist among an inner-city African-American neighborhood-based gang, a Caucasian outlaw motorcycle gang, and a Hispanic prison gang? The answer is gang mentality. This mentality is simply a philosophy toward life. This philosophy is sometimes described as the "thug life," "mi vida loca" (my crazy life), "smile now, cry later," "outlaw," or "1% er" (as in, only 1% of all motorcycle riders are outlaw motorcycle gang members). Clarence Lusane wrote in a 1999 internet commentary entitled, "Jailhouse Knocks: A Review of HBO's 'Thug Life in D.C.'":

> [T]hug life refer[s] to a lifestyle of professed and celebrated criminality. Echoing real and cinematic gangster's styles, a small, but significant segment of inner-city young black males have embraced a fatalism that envisions a heroic, shoot-em-out death with either their "enemies" on the street, or with cops.

Clarence Lusane, *Jailhouse Knocks: A review of HBO's "Thug Life in D.C."* (May 22, 1999), http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/1999-05/may_22lusane.htm.

"Thug Life in D.C." featured an interview of an inmate while he was incarcerated. This inmate, a crew member in Washington, D.C. who was arrested and convicted for shooting a police officer and later charged and convicted for an unrelated murder, proclaimed, "I'm the definition of thug." He stated that it was "in my blood" and if released from jail he would kill again and "do what I have to do to survive." *See id.*

This inmate's outlook toward life, however, is omnipresent, with no racial or ethnic boundaries. It is "outlaw glamour" where the gangsters make their own rules; where they take and do what they want and worry about the consequences later; and where respect is demanded and power rules. This lifestyle is the antithesis of prevailing societal

values. It is a subculture where bad is good and good is bad. The ability to commit unthinkable acts of violence against one's enemies, or to demonstrate proficiency in criminal ventures, is envied and rewarded with respect and financial gain. It is a measure of one's success in life, as epitomized in the aforementioned lyrics: "I got dope and coke and all and I'm selling it ... I'm killin ... for the hell of it."

This author has reviewed numerous transcripts of interviews, as well as audio and video recordings, involving gang members who have adopted the thug mentality. For instance, a gang member in the Chicago area when asked to describe gang life, stated that "it was like heaven to me." He added that "it comes natural to us ... we go to war with other gangs every day ... we just know how to do it." This young man was convicted of attempting to kill a police officer. He also stated that if he had not been arrested for the shooting of a police officer, he would have received a "high rank" or obtained other rewards from the gang. Another gang member from the Los Angeles area described how his crack cocaine distribution business made him feel "like God." He recounted how people did whatever he wanted in exchange for a "piece of crack." Just as a career police officer or prosecutor may embody a sense of self-identification and self-worth from his or her professional calling and successes, self-esteem for many who choose a gangster way of life becomes dependant on their "thug" exploits. The "gangsta" mentality affects everything they do and who they are.

It is not unheard of for a prosecutor to remark, "I don't see the conspiracy," to investigators during the course of a gang investigation. Demonstrating that an array of criminal incidents committed by a group of suspects are actually connected and are predicate acts of an ongoing gang conspiracy can often be difficult. Thus, it is important for investigators and prosecutors to understand the gang mentality in order to recognize the legal significance of actions by gang members, as well as to predict future actions.

Moreover, by understanding past and anticipating future behavioral manifestations, investigators and prosecutors may question witnesses and informants in a way that can reveal gang motivations for individual actions and lead to acquiring evidence of the gang conspiracy. For example, a prosecutor or investigator might ask a witness, "Did gang members flash hand signs prior to committing an assault?" Detecting and identifying gang behaviors relative to criminal acts will aid the prosecutor, the judge, and ultimately the jury to "see the conspiracy."

VI. Manifestation of the gangster mentality: anticipated gang behaviors

A. Continuing criminal activity

One of the obvious anticipated behaviors of gang members is criminal activity. Numerous gang members are repeat offenders who have specific modus operandi and geographical areas of operation. As an illustration, during a gang and drug conspiracy investigation several years ago, a cooperating witness who had been involved with a gang at a high level was debriefed by this author. The witness stated that he could not understand why there were drug treatment programs, but no treatment programs for weaning "high rollers off of the money," adding that "once you taste it, you've got to have it." Just as a narcotics investigator might be able to accurately predict the recurring behaviors of drug addicts, an investigator can anticipate that high-level gang members will repeat certain criminal activities. In addition, there may be times in investigations when it appears that certain principal suspects are no longer criminally active. Knowledgeable investigators, however, can anticipate that such suspects may change geographical locations or proceed in a more clandestine manner, but they will likely remain criminally active.

B. Conspicuous gang violence

Violent behavior by gang members is easily anticipated. The gangs frequently will arm themselves for protection against thugs and other gangs that attempt to infringe on their territory or steal their drugs. This creates a market for firearms and other weapons, and, not surprisingly, the number of illegal gun runners has grown proportionately to that market. Many homicides and nonfatal shootings are directly related to disputes between gangs, internal gang disputes, and/or gang members acting individually, or with others because of personal "nongang" motives. Tragically, many "innocent" people become victims of gang violence.